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PAUL AND HELLENISM

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The following pages are intended to furnish a survey of the work which has been done in recent years upon the subject "Paul and Hellenism." I have, however, not merely endeavored to enumerate a list of books with their contents, but, in so far as space permitted, I have set forth the problems themselves and their possible solutions. The subject "Paul and Hellenism" seems to me beyond question to designate the field in which the chief problems of Pauline study for the future lie.

I have confined myself to the consideration of German works. This, indeed, is not to be taken to mean that nothing worthy of mention in this field is done outside of Germany. Certainly much valuable work is being done in Anglo-Saxon lands. One readily thinks of many items in W. M. Ramsay's books, of P. Gardner's excellent exposition of *The Religious Experience of St. Paul*, or of the valuable investigation of the mystery-religions which is to be found in the researches of J. G. Frazer, R. R. Marett, and Miss Harrison. But I regard it as quite unnecessary for a German to bring English and American works to the attention of Anglo-Saxon readers. Moreover, English and American treatises are not so fully accessible to me as the German. And, finally, it is possible to set forth the problems and their solutions even if one restricts himself to the field of German

scholarship. On these grounds I would explain and excuse my provincialism.

Before taking up our specific subject one very important fact should be strongly emphasized. This fact is almost self-evident, yet it must ever be kept in mind when placing Paul into relation with his surroundings; that is, he cannot possibly be explained merely as a result of his environment. No man can be so explained, least of all a superior individual who has awakened to a self-conscious life of distinctive personality and who is inwardly aware of the mystery of his own person. Paul experienced God inwardly, and from the day of his vision on the way to Damascus the consciousness of being chosen and called of God dominated his life. In ecstasy, revelations, visions, voices, and intuitions which came forth from the obscurity of his consciousness God made himself known to Paul. The yearning and self-torture, the seeking after God, in which so many of the best of his countrymen remained involved, were for Paul quieted. Peace and grace and blessed assurance had been born within him, for God had spoken to him. To one who has had an inner religious experience it is not necessary to explain at length that personal religious life in its subtlest and yet strongest manifestations never can be derived merely from education and environment. On the contrary, in such an experience the soul in its deepest life touches God, and God speaks to the soul. And that which is true of the simplest life of an average man must be still more readily assumed in the case of a religious hero and leader such as Paul. But we must frankly recognize that scientific inquiry, which can indeed describe and in some degree explain, at this point ceases and here we must resort to intuition and interpretation of life's deepest mysteries.

Nevertheless any specific personal religious life, with its experiences and inner conviction, always clothes itself in the thought-forms and language of a particular age. Every religious individual finds himself in a strong stream of tradition which in turn supports and enriches him, and if he wishes to exert an influence upon his contemporaries he must speak in words and accents intelligible to his own age. What are these links of attachment between Paul and his age?

In attempting to answer this question, one is confronted at the outset by the fact that Paul was a Jew. In this article, however, which is concerned in an especial way with Paul's Greek environment, I shall deal only very briefly with the question of his Jewish presuppositions. These presuppositions are perfectly familiar to any student.

Paul is a Jew, as he himself was keenly conscious—"a Hebrew the son of a Hebrew, a Pharisee the son of a Pharisee." Paul grew up, and remained, within the rich religious tradition of his people. Their sacred writings, their method of interpretation, their religious instruction, their pious customs, and the ethical training of Judaism were from youth familiar to Paul, who was born in a Pharisean home and became prominent in the learning of the Pharisees. Yet we must not think that Paul's Jewish inheritance can be understood by looking solely to the Old Testament. This procedure was possible for students of an earlier age to whom post-exilic Judaism was virtually an unknown quantity. We now know that Judaism itself developed considerably in the centuries following the Exile and that it also was extensively and emphatically influenced by foreign religions and ways of thinking. We also know this later Judaism of the Hellenistic period from a number of sources, the most important of which are the so-called Apocrypha of the Septuagint, the extant apocalypses, and the writings of Philo. Even rabbinical tradition, as contained in the various strata of the Talmud, is to be drawn upon more than formerly. As aids to this study, besides Schürer's¹ great and well-known work, we may place Bousset's exceptionally valuable exposition² as well as certain sections from Wendland's book³ to which reference will later be frequently made. Much work, however, remains to be done in this field, although excellent treatments of individual questions have appeared. As early as 1893 R. Kabisch⁴ expounded the eschatology of Paul with the help of the material which contemporary

¹ *Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes* (3 vols., 4th ed., Leipzig, 1901 ff.).

² *Die Religion des Judentums im neutestamentlichen Zeitalter* (2d ed., Berlin, 1906).

³ *Die hellenistisch-römische Kultur in ihren Beziehungen zu Judentum und Christentum* (2d ed., Tübingen, 1912).

⁴ *Die Eschatologie des Paulus* (Göttingen, 1893).

Judaism offered. Brückner undertook a similar task for Christology,¹ and Everling² and Dibelius³ interpreted the Pauline teaching about spirits and angels. These investigations, and others that might be mentioned, show a strong Jewish substratum, not only in the realm of Paul's religious ideas, but also in his religious feelings. To be sure, when we have attained an understanding of the distinctive Pauline teaching of justification by faith we have comprehended an essential—indeed the most essential—item in Pauline religion. Yet just as this central item certainly confronts us in a form conditioned by Paul's Jewish inheritance, so it is certain that in other respects his religion is to be understood in the light of the theology and practice of later Judaism.

The foregoing observations regarding the Jewish background of Pauline thought and feeling must inevitably have suggested further queries. What sort of a Judaism was it in which Paul grew up? Was it that of Palestinian Pharisaism? Does not the tradition which placed Paul's birth and the most important years of his youth in Tarsus, and further, the language in which his extant letters are written, testify that Hellenism, the dominant world-culture of his age, must have exerted a decisive influence upon him? Can the apostle be properly classified when, as frequently happens, he is called a "Jew of genuinely Palestinian stamp," a "full-blooded Jew"? These questions suggest the problems which it is the chief purpose of this paper to discuss.

Paul designates himself a Hebrew the son of a Hebrew. Although his family lived in the Diaspora, Hebrew—that is, Aramaic—was the language of his home. Thus Paul's family was certainly consciously conservative, and the religious life of the home must have been conducted in the Aramaic, and partly also in the Hebrew, language. The data which Paul himself supplies make it clear that Aramaic was his mother-tongue.

But Paul's letters themselves immediately suggest a contradiction. These are written in Greek and Paul is fully master of the *Koine* language of his day. He must have learned it even in his

¹ *Die Entstehung der Paulinischen Christologie* (Strassburg, 1903).

² *Paulinische Angelologie und Dämonologie* (Göttingen, 1888).

³ *Die Geisterwelt im Glauben des Paulus* (Göttingen, 1909).

youth, although he also had ample opportunity during his long seventeen-year residence in Antioch and Syria to perfect himself in the use of the Greek speech. Moreover, bi-lingualism is a well-known phenomenon which may be frequently observed even today in both the nearer and farther East. Since Paul grew up with intimate knowledge of spoken Greek, since he spent the formative years of his youth and later, after conversion, a long period of active life in an emphatically Hellenistic environment outside Palestine, his relationship to Hellenism was from the start quite different from, and was far more positive than, that of Peter the apostle or James the Lord's brother. In discussing the question of Paul's relation to Hellenism it would be particularly important to know more of Paul's youth. But unfortunately at this point his letters and the Book of Acts fail us completely. There is, however, another way of procuring important material on this subject; that is by investigating carefully the situation in which Paul spent his youth. We do not know when he came to Jerusalem, but it certainly was not in his earliest youth, and in Tarsus he must have previously come into contact with Hellenism, especially with the non-Jewish culture of the East. Hence, so far as the sources of information permit, the cultural conditions of Tarsus must be examined in minutest detail. In this unexplored field an estimable monograph by Böhlig¹ has recently appeared. Böhlig presents his material under three main topics: the religion of Tarsus, the philosophy of Tarsus, and the Judaism of Tarsus. He enlarges in a most desirable way upon the admirable exposition which Ramsay² had already given. Böhlig shows that the language, style, and thought-world of Paul are best explained, not from the standpoint of Jerusalem or Antioch, but from Tarsus as a point of departure. Paul is naturally fundamentally influenced by the environment which he found in the Judaism of his native city. Moreover, the Judaism of Tarsus politically and socially, culturally and religiously, differed from the Judaism of Palestine; and it also held a distinctive place within the Judaism of the Diaspora in general.

¹ *Die Geisteskultur von Tarsos im augusteischen Zeitalter mit Berücksichtigung der Paulinischen Schriften* (Göttingen, 1913).

² *The Cities of St. Paul* (London, 1907), pp. 85-244.

Other foreign influences also touched Paul in his native city. The popular faith of Cilicia had been strongly affected by ancient and continued contact with Cappadocia, Assyria, Babylonia, and Persia. Syrian Hellenistic Mysticism also took firm root in Tarsus. The philosophy which flourished in Tarsus was Stoicism, and prominent Stoic leaders came from there. Paul came into touch with Stoic philosophy in Tarsus, perhaps through the medium of Tarsian Judaism. Finally, in the popular heathen beliefs of Tarsus the god Sandan, a savior and redeemer exalted to heaven, played an especial rôle; and this deity appears to have exerted an influence upon the religious terminology of Paul. Böhlig has given us a very good treatment of the subject, using the extant data. Unfortunately these are far from as complete as could be desired. The ancient city of Tarsus itself still lies buried under the houses of the new city. Is it possible that future excavation may here bring to light buildings and inscriptions of greatest significance?

In the light of Paul's family connections and education—for he at least grew up surrounded by the culture of his own people—he cannot possibly be reckoned among the lower classes of society. His Greek to be sure cannot be measured by the standards of Attic literature, but he handled with great skill the rich vocabulary of the *Koine*, which he reinforced with expressions from his own Bible, the Septuagint. Besides the well-known works of Deissmann and the researches of other scholars, Nägeli¹ has very forcibly shown the richness of Paul's vocabulary.

Closely connected with vocabulary is the question of style. One who analyzes the style of Paul must recognize here as elsewhere the twofold aspect of Paul's life. He stands within both the ancient oriental and the Greek traditional cultures. Norden, the Berlin philologist, in his recently published and very valuable book,² has shown how the Orient with its ancient religious linguistic heritage has projected itself into the Pauline letters. There is one chief item in this oriental heritage: Paul, both in language and in style, shows the influence of the remarkable poetic form of passages from the Septuagint (above all from the prophets and Psalms), a

¹ *Der Wortschatz des Apostels Paulus* (Göttingen, 1905).

² *Agnostos Theos* (Leipzig, 1912).

form which was very impressive, even in the Greek. With these oriental stylistic elements is mingled in Paul, as previously in the Old Testament poetry itself, a very ancient type of elevated Hebraic address, for which parallels are to be found in Egypt and Babylonia, in ancient hymns, prayers, and royal inscriptions. An example of oriental style—conceived in a wider sense than that included in Hebraic—is found in Col. 1:12–20.¹

Besides this formal oriental element of great beauty, one finds in Paul very distinct features of Greek oratory. He does not employ ancient Attic style; he does not speak to us in the periods of Demosthenes. In view of the whole course of his previous education, this form of Greek style was never accessible to Paul. But he shows distinctly the influence of contemporary Greek even in its higher form as current in the rhetoric of the time. For example, he employs short clauses, parataxis, equally balanced sentences, parallelism, antitheses, play on words, and alliteration.² In individual instances it is not easy to tell whether Paul's sentence parallelism is Semitic (oriental) or Greek. At this point Norden carefully endeavors, however, to elucidate the distinction between Greek and Semitic forms of address. A strong Greek element is undoubtedly present in Paul, and some investigations, which are, however, far from sufficient, clearly exhibit these facts. A beginning has been made by J. Weiss,³ who followed out suggestions received from Blass, *Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Griechisch*. Unfortunately this beginning has not been followed up nor has it received the attention it deserved. Now, however, reference can be made to Bultmann's⁴ and Bonhöffer's⁵ researches, as well as to Norden's observations in *Agnostos Theos* and Wendland's valuable remarks in his exposition of the ancient Christian literature.⁶ Much accurate information upon this subject has been assembled in the

¹ Norden, *op. cit.*, pp. 250–54.

² Cf. I Cor. 7:18–24, 27.

³ *Beiträge zur Paulinischen Rhetorik* (Göttingen, 1897).

⁴ *Der Stil der Paulinischen Predigt und die kynisch-stoische Diatribe* (Göttingen, 1910).

⁵ *Epiktet und das Neue Testament* (Giessen, 1911).

⁶ *Die urchristlichen Literaturformen* (Tübingen, 1912).

materials and observations given by J. Weiss in his commentary on I Corinthians,¹ as well as by Heinrici in his various commentaries on the Corinthian letters.

The question which these observations about Greek rhetoric raise in Paul's case are: In how far did Paul consciously employ the devices of Greek rhetoric in the passages where these features appear? and, Whence did he derive his sense of Greek style? and, How are his very striking agreements with the forms of the Diatribe and the Asiatic oratory to be explained? Certainly we must suppose that Paul, in spite of his independence of "Greek wisdom," shows, in this particular, intimate contact with the Greek culture of the age. He cannot have learned this in the street and the market-place only. Again we cannot restrain an earnest desire to know something more regarding the course of the apostle's education.

A further question may appropriately be raised here, as it belongs to the subject of Paul and Hellenism. This is the problem of the literary genus of Paul's letters. Several years ago Deissmann opened the problem,² and more recently³ he has discussed it further. In contrast with a type of thought which consciously or unconsciously starts with the idea that the Pauline letters are artistic literary products, Deissmann has rendered great service by demonstrating decisively the non-literary and occasional character of the Pauline letters. But the discussions which have been connected with Deissmann's assertions have led to important modifications of his conclusions. Certainly one must not exaggerate the non-literary character of Paul's letters. The tone and style and the character of the themes discussed raise these writings far above the ancient contemporary occasional documents, the papyrus letters. In numerous passages Paul clearly employs forms of argument which transcend the character of occasional writing. Above all we may mention in this connection the letter to the Romans, which

¹ *Der erste Korintherbrief* (Meyer's *Kommentar über das Neue Testament*, 5. Abt. 9. Aufl. [Göttingen, 1910]).

² *Bibelstudien* (Marburg, 1895), pp. 187 ff.

³ *Licht vom Osten* (Tübingen, 1909), pp. 100 ff., and *Paulus* (Tübingen, 1911), pp. 4 ff.

expounds the content and essence of the Pauline gospel, its relation to Judaism and the law, and especially the divine plan of salvation. This letter goes far beyond any mere occasional document and as a work of instruction quite loses the character of an intimate writing designed only for a narrow circle.

Passing from the consideration of forms to the question of content, the first problem which presents itself is Paul's relation to earlier Hellenistic ideas, particularly his relation to the philosophy and the religion of Hellenism.

To begin with the former, it is certain that Paul's contact with the philosophy of his age was not thoroughgoing. There is one portion of the New Testament, however, which shows the apostle to have been in very close touch with contemporary philosophy and especially with the highly developed form which it assumed in the Stoicism of the early imperial period. This is seen in Acts, chap. 17, in Paul's Areopagus address. But it can be assumed with certainty that this address was not spoken by Paul, but is a work of the author of Acts. Valuable as the speech is in showing us a very early connection between Christian preaching and the content of idealistic [Stoic] philosophy, it cannot be used as a source for the preaching of Paul. In treating this question we have to rely solely upon data which can be derived from Paul's own letters. Material for this purpose is to be found in a series of commentaries and special researches. Besides the above-mentioned investigations of Bonhöffer and Bultmann, the commentaries of Heinrici and J. Weiss on I and II Corinthians, and Wendland's valuable exposition of Greco-Roman culture, the following works may be mentioned: Clemen's *Religionsgeschichtliche Erklärung des Neuen Testaments*,¹ pp. 45 ff.; the well-known works on New Testament theology by Holtzmann, Feine, and Weinel, which appeared in second editions in, respectively, 1911, 1912, and 1913; certain sections in Pfleiderer's *Das Urchristentum, seine Schriften und Lehren*,² the commentaries of Lietzmann and Dibelius on the Pauline

¹ Giessen, 1909. English tr., *Primitive Christianity and Its Non-Jewish Sources* (Edinburgh, 1912).

² Two vols., Berlin, 1902². English tr., *Primitive Christianity: Its Writings and Teachings in Their Historical Connections* (4 vols., New York, 1906-12).

letters;¹ Feine's article on Christianity and the Stoics.² Very important contributions to the understanding of Pauline Christology are made by the recently published book of Bousset, *Kyrios Christos*.³

At the outset we must admit that Paul could readily come into contact with ancient philosophy. It did not take long for men who were content with a smattering of these things to become proficient, since philosophy in the imperial period had long since forsaken its high pedestal and its exclusive circles. It had appeared in the market-place and the street, it had assumed a popular form and was made at home in wide circles through the activity of its advocates, the traveling preachers. A remarkable picture of its proclamation, its advocates, and its content has been preserved for us in Epictetus' *Dissertations*, ii. 22 (περὶ Κυνισμοῦ). Thus the Cynic-Stoic Diatribe had forced its way into wide circles of society and Paul, from youth up, in various places of residence during the period that his life is unknown to us, might have come into contact with philosophy even though he had never himself read a philosophical tract. But even this possibility does not at all need to be absolutely excluded. Paul certainly had opportunity to become acquainted with this literature, and he was sufficiently well educated to understand what he read and heard. Furthermore, we should never forget that Hellenistic Judaism had already come under the influence of philosophy. In the popular philosophy of the Roman imperial period the closely related preaching of the Stoics and Cynics occupied the first place. Paul is to be set into relation with these two schools above all others. But he may also have come into contact with neo-Pythagorean and Platonic thinking, for even the views of these schools found expression in the popular philosophical preaching of the time. The close arguments and similarities between various philosophical schools in the realm of ethics and in their attitude toward life

¹ *Handbuch zum Neuen Testament*. Herausgegeben von H. Lietzmann. Bd. III, 1, *Die vier Paulinischen Hauptbriefe*. Erklärt von H. Lietzmann (Tübingen, 1906-10); Bd. III, 2, *Die neun kleinen Briefe des Paulus*. Erklärt von M. Dibelius (Tübingen, 1911-13).

² "Stoicismus und Christentum," *Theologisches Literaturblatt*, 1905, No. 7.

³ Göttingen, 1914.

were all very significant for the cultural status of the age; and Stoics, Cynics, and neo-Pythagoreans differed but little from one another in what they were saying, either among themselves or to the world at large. The content of their teaching and their method of treatment were largely similar if not identical. Yet when we are looking for points of contact between Paul and contemporary philosophy we must consider primarily the Stoic-Cynic popular philosophy, because the preaching of these two closely connected schools reached the widest circles, and especially because Tarsus was, as indicated above, a seat of Stoic philosophy and a center from which it emanated.

In the consideration of this question we must not allow ourselves to be led astray by the decided disrespect with which Paul himself in I Corinthians, chaps. 1-3, speaks of the wisdom of this world, or by the fact that he chances to place together in Col. 2:8 philosophy and vain deceit as the tradition of men. Here, as in Romans, chaps. 1 and 2, it is the missionary and messenger of the faith who speaks out of the blessed certainty which glows within his breast, dispensing with all other knowledge since this is of no avail and becomes even an obstacle on the way to truth (Rom. 1:22). According to the testimony of Paul's own consciousness he owed nothing to the wisdom of the world. And we may, indeed, at the outset concede that any extensive systematic influence of Greek philosophy upon Paul is out of the question. We are concerned only with individual thoughts, notions, images, and modes of expression. But with this modification we can at least produce, from the content of Greek philosophy, striking parallels to the Pauline letters. A few of these parallels from the chief letters of Paul may now be noted.

In a well-known passage Paul speaks of the natural knowledge of God which the heathen had, who from the works of creation ought to have recognized with the eyes of the mind the invisible God. In the Stoic treatise, *De mundo*, passing under the name of Aristotle, it is said that God "though invisible to all mankind is seen from his very works."¹ And Cicero says in the *Tusculan*

¹ πᾶση θνητῇ φύσει γενόμενος ἀθεώρητος (scil. ὁ θεός) ἀπ' αὐτῶν τῶν ἔργων θεωρεῖται.—*De mundo* 6.

Disputations i. 70: "When we view these and numberless other things can we doubt that someone presides over them or has made them or is the regulator of such works and blessings? Thus though you see not the soul of man, as you do not see God, yet as you recognized God from his works so you must recognize the divine power of the soul from its faculty of remembering, its inventiveness, its quickness of motion, and all its beauty of virtue."¹ It is a fundamental principle of Stoic ethics that all moral action consists in following the unwritten law implanted in man by nature and by God; as in Cicero, *De legibus* i. 6. 18, to mention only one illustration. Paul clearly refers to this widespread notion in the "unwritten law" (ἀγραφος νόμος) of Rom. 2:15. In the same passage Paul employs the term "conscience" (συνείδησις), which he also uses frequently elsewhere. So far as we know he is the first Christian to use this exceedingly important conception. In Rom. 1:29-31 Paul gives a catalogue of vices, and at other places in his letters he presents similar collocations (Rom. 13:13; I Cor. 5:10 f.; 6:9 f.; II Cor. 12:20 f.; Gal. 5:19-21; Col. 3:5, 8; cf. also the catalogue of virtues in Gal. 5:22 f.). Commonly with Paul as with the Stoics, who very frequently employed this form of ethical instruction, these catalogues of vices are so phrased that the sinful disposition and not individual sinful acts, as in the Old Testament catalogues of vices (Exod., chaps. 20-23; Lev., chap. 19), stand in the foreground. Since numerous catalogues of vices are to be found in the Hellenistic Jewish literature which has been affected by Stoic influence we do not need to be puzzled regarding the question of how the influence of Stoic ethics reached Paul. In the same connection in Rom. 1:28 Paul uses a favorite and genuinely Stoic expression, "the things which are not fitting" (τὰ μὴ καθήκοντα). Thus within relatively narrow limits in a few sentences of Romans we find several points of contact between Paul and philosophy. A few examples from I Corinthians may

¹ Haec igitur et alia innumerabilia cum cernimus, possumusne dubitare, quin iis praesit aliquis uel effector uel moderator tanti operis et muneris? Sic mentem hominis, quamuis eam non uideas, ut deum non uides, tamē ut deum adgnoscis ex operibus eius, sic ex memoria rerum et inuentione et celeritate motus omnique pulchritudine uirtutis uim diuinam mentis adgnosco.

be added to the list. The figure of the milk and the solid food, which Paul employs in I Cor. 3:2, is of frequent occurrence in the Stoic-Cynic Diatribe. Thus Epictetus, *Dissertations* ii. 16. 39, says: "Why will you not be weaned as children are, and take more solid food?"¹ And similarly in iii. 24. 9: "Shall we never wean ourselves and remember what we have heard from the philosophers?"² See also Philo *De agricultura* 9: "But since milk is the food of infants, but cakes made of wheat are the food of full-grown men, so also the soul must have a milk-like nourishment in its age of childhood, namely, the elementary instruction of encyclical science. But the perfect food appropriate for men consists of explanations dictated by prudence and temperance and every virtue."³ In I Cor. 4:9 Paul says that the apostles are as criminals who strive for their own execution, a spectacle for angels and men. It is a favorite Stoic figure that the wise man, in his struggle with his untoward fate, is a spectacle for gods and men. See, for example, Seneca *De providentia* 2. 9: "Behold a sight worthy to be viewed by a god interested in his own work, behold a pair worthy of a god, a brave man matched with evil fortune . . . I do not know what nobler spectacle Jupiter could find on earth, should he turn his eyes thither, than that of Cato, after his party had more than once been defeated, still standing upright amid the ruins of the commonwealth."⁴ In I Cor. 9:24-27 Paul compares the laborious struggle of the Christian after salvation with the anxieties and hardships to which the contestant subjects himself in preparation for the competitive games. The figure recurs also

¹ Οὐ θέλεις ἤδη ὡς τὰ παῖδια ἀπογαλακτισθῆναι καὶ ἀπτεσθαι τροφῆς στερεωτέρας;

² Οὐκ ἀπογαλακτίσομεν ἤδη ποθ' ἐαυτοὺς καὶ μεμνησόμεθα ὧν ἡκούσαμεν παρὰ τῶν φιλοσόφων;

³ ἐπεὶ δὲ νηπίοις μὲν ἐστὶ γάλα τροφή, τελείοις δὲ τὰ ἐκ πυρῶν πέμματα, καὶ ψυχῆς γαλακτώδεις μὲν ἂν εἶεν τροφαὶ κατὰ τὴν παιδικὴν ἡλικίαν τὰ τῆς ἐγκυκλίου μουσικῆς προπαιδεύματα, τέλειαι δὲ καὶ ἀνδράσιν ἐμπρεπεῖς αἱ διὰ φρονήσεως καὶ σωφροσύνης καὶ ἀπάσης ἀρετῆς ὑψηλότητες.

⁴ ecce spectaculum dignum, ad quod respiciat intentus operi suo deus, ecce par deo dignum, uir fortis cum fortuna mala compositus . . . non uideo, inquam, quid habeat in terris Iuppiter pulchrius, si conuertere animum uelit, quam ut spectet Catonem jam partibus non semel fractis stantem nihilo minus inter ruinas publicas rectum.

in other places in Paul's letters, e.g., Rom. 9:16; Gal. 2:2; 5:7; Phil. 2:16; 3:13 f. But the comparisons and metaphors drawn from the games are the most certain and emphatic instrument of ethical instruction within the Cynic-Stoic popular philosophy. Many passages of this sort are to be found in Epictetus, one of the most important being *Dissertations* iii. 15. 2 ff.: "I would conquer at the Olympic games [you say]. But consider what precedes and follows, and then if it be for your advantage engage in the affair. You must conform to rules, submit to a diet, refrain from dainties, take compulsory physical exercise at a stated hour in heat and in cold; you must drink neither cold water, nor wine on any occasion. Then in the combat you may be thrown into a ditch, dislocate a hand, turn an ankle, swallow much dust, be scourged, and after all these things you may then be conquered. After taking account of these possibilities, if you still wish to do so, go into athletic training."¹ Also Seneca *Epist.* 78. 16: "What blows athletes endure in their desire for glory! Let us likewise surmount all difficulties, our reward being not simply a crown or a palm . . . but virtue and stability of mind, and peace acquired for the future."² The exposition of Paul in I Cor. 6:12; 9:1; 10:23 recalls the well-known Stoic-Cynic doctrine that everything natural is permissible, and that the wise man alone is free, noble, and a king and lord over all. Also other passages in Paul's letters in which he in very similar language extols his freedom from the law and from similar obligations may have been influenced by the Stoic teaching of the wise man and his freedom (cf. Gal. 4:23 f., 26, 30 f.; 5:1, 13; Rom. 6:20; 7:3; 8:2). The fundamental notion of the unity of all humanity, expressed in Gal. 3:28, readily reminds us of Stoic statements.

¹ "θέλω Ὀλύμπια νικῆσαι" ἀλλὰ σκόπει τὰ καθηγούμενα αὐτοῦ καὶ τὰ ἀκόλουθα. καὶ οὕτως ἂν σοι λυσιτελῇ, ἀπτοῦ τοῦ ἔργου. δεῖ σε εὐτακτεῖν, ἀναγκοφαγεῖν, ἀπέχεσθαι πεμμάτων, γυμνάζεσθαι πρὸς ἀνάγκην, ὥρα τεταγμένη, ἐν καύματι, ἐν ψύχει· μὴ ψυχρὸν πίνειν, μὴ οἶνον, ὅτ' ἔτυχεν . . . εἴτα ἐν τῷ ἀγῶνι παρορύσσεσθαι, ἔστιν ὅτε χεῖρα ἐκβαλεῖν, σφυρὸν στρέψαι, πολλὴν ἀφὴν καταπιεῖν, μαστιγωθῆναι καὶ μετὰ τούτων πάντων ἔσθ' ὅτε νικηθῇται. ταῦτα λογισάμενος, ἂν ἔτι θέλῃς, ἔρχου ἐπὶ τὸ ἀθλεῖν.

² athletae quantum plagarum . . . ferunt . . . gloriae cupiditate . . . nos quoque euincamus omnia, quorum praemium non corona nec palma est . . . sed uirtus et firmitas animi et pax in ceterum parta.

Still other parallels between Paul and philosophical thought could be produced. But the question which arises at this point is not the possibility of assembling complete and impressive parallels, but properly to explain the parallelisms. Are the agreements concerned only with analogies, ideas, and modes of speech which were in the air, so to speak, forming a constituent part of the intellectual atmosphere which had been widely disseminated by the popular philosophical propaganda? Or have we to recognize in Paul the fact of an actual contact with philosophy, so that he in some way came directly under its influence? I have already above alluded to this problem. The question cannot be solved without bringing in the data supplied by a study of the Pauline rhetoric. The style of Paul and his relation to the style of the popular philosophical tractate; the question whether Paul owed his style—clearly designed to be effective—only to the current speech, or whether he had read and heard the popular Greek literature of the Stoics and the Cynics—these questions must be solved along with the above-mentioned problem of the influence which the content of popular philosophy exerted upon Paul. I certainly believe that we may credit Paul with a somewhat closer contact with Greek wisdom than his own allusions in the first chapters of I Corinthians lead us to suppose. Bonhöffer has set Paul beside the rigid Stoic system as it is revived by Epictetus, and since Paul does not fit in this system Bonhöffer does not allow any relationship between Paul and Stoicism. But when we undertake to solve the problem of Paul's relation to Greek philosophy we must utilize the much more pervasive platonizing ideas and sentiments of middle Stoicism as it had existed long before Paul's time, as seen, for example, in the famous Posidonius. We must certainly take account of the whole range of popular philosophy if we would solve our problem.

Turning now to the second part of our task, we have to consider Paul's relation to Hellenistic religion. Within recent years we have become somewhat more accurately acquainted with the religion of Hellenism. Its tradition has come down to us partly in literary form, as, for example, in the *Metamorphoses* of Apuleius, the treatise of Plutarch on Isis and Osiris, and the corpus of

Hermetic writings. Fortunately, moreover, our knowledge has been furthered by the recovery of inscriptions and papyri, such as the well-known *Mithrasliturgie* which Dieterich treated in his investigation to be mentioned presently, or the hymn of Isis preserved in an inscription of Andros, or, in general, the numerous inscriptions which give information regarding the spread of the Isis cult in the Roman Empire.

Hellenistic religion in the imperial period is essentially the product of oriental influences pressing into the Mediterranean world from the East. We must clearly recognize that, in religion as in many other phases of Hellenistic culture, "Hellenism" means not only a Grecizing of oriental elements, but much more an orientalizing of Greek culture. In the different religions and mysteries which we meet widely scattered over the Roman world in the imperial period we have an oriental commodity bearing a Greek stamp and label. Recent study in the history of the religions of this period has made us familiar with the most important phases of these Hellenistic cults and has also set them into relation with nascent Christianity. We can best inform ourselves regarding this triumph of the East over the West from Cumont's excellent lectures on the *Oriental Religions*, where much of the pertinent literature is also listed.¹ The philologists Dieterich and Reitzenstein have further interpreted the material by very valuable investigations in which they have set it into relation with primitive Christianity, and especially into relation with Paul.² Among theologians who seek in this same field important information for the understanding of Paulinism are Bousset³ and J. Weiss⁴ in their expositions of the Corinthian letters; also Heitmüller⁵ and Lietz-

¹ F. Cumont, *Les religions orientales dans le paganisme romain* (Paris, 1906). A German translation appeared in 1910 and an English one in 1911.

² A. Dieterich, *Eine Mithrasliturgie* (Leipzig, 1910²); R. Reitzenstein, *Poimandres: Studien zur griechisch-ägyptischen und frühchristlichen Literatur* (Leipzig, 1904), and *Die hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen: Ihre Grundgedanken und Wirkungen* (Leipzig, 1910). The latter is especially important for theologians.

³ In *Die Schriften des Neuen Testaments* edited by J. Weiss (Göttingen, 1908), II, 72-214.

⁴ In Meyer's *Kommentar*, 5. Abt.; see above, p. 504.

⁵ *Im Namen Jesu* (Göttingen, 1903); *Taufe und Abendmahl bei Paulus* (Göttingen, 1903); cf. also *Taufe und Abendmahl im Urchristentum* (Tübingen, 1911).

mann and Debelius, who have interpreted the Pauline letters in the third volume of Lietzmann's *Handbuch* which has already been frequently mentioned. Explicit reference may also be made to the treatment of *religionsgeschichtliche* questions in Weinelt's above-mentioned work on New Testament theology and P. Wendland's exposition of the Greco-Roman culture. Even Jacoby's¹ can be consulted, and we gratefully remember also the older works of Anrich² and Wobbermin.³

When we undertake to investigate the question of Paul's Hellenism we must at the outset remind ourselves that in Paul's day Hellenism had affected Judaism, or at least the Judaism of the Diaspora. Judaism did not occupy a lonely island upon whose shores the great rising wave of oriental world-syncretism broke without leaving any trace of its effect. Not only through Judaism, but also in other ways—ways which we are quite unable to specify—must Hellenism have touched Paul. Mystical religion, which occupied so prominent a place in heathendom, exhibits so much similarity with Pauline religion in spirit, symbolism, and thinking that we now and then clearly recognize the same atmosphere. We recall Paul's strong antithesis between flesh and spirit and the closely related bias toward asceticism; the notion of supramundane powers, great spirits of heaven (*κοσμοκράτορες*) who hold man within their power and from whose dominion he is to be freed; the conception of "mystery" (*μυστήριον*) and sacrament; the activity of the savior god—we recall these and many other things which appear so prominently in the preaching of Paul. The most important item upon which our recognition of Paul's relation to Hellenism chiefly depends may now be treated somewhat more in detail.

Paul has two thought-categories which he uses in expounding his conception of salvation and redemption. The one category is entirely, or at least predominantly, Jewish: law, works, vicarious sacrifice, faith, man's righteousness, God's righteousness—these

¹ *Die antike Mysterienreligionen und das Christentum* (Tübingen, 1910).

² *Das antike Mysterienwesen in seinem Einfluss auf das Christentum* (Göttingen, 1894).

³ *Religionsgeschichtliche Studien zur Frage der Beeinflussung des Urchristentums durch das antike Mysterienwesen* (Berlin, 1896).

are the great familiar ideas which we meet in Paul's writings. But everyone acquainted with Paul's letters knows that alongside of these a second group of ideas is found in which Paul can also express his religious experience: spirit and flesh, death with Christ, and new life through union with the Risen One, Pneuma and new mystical life. Also ecstasy, whose paroxysms and delights are familiar to Paul, finds its place in this theory of redemption with the religious experiences it presupposes.

The Christ-mysticism and God-mysticism of Paul, his thought of the inward and realistic union of the believer with his Lord—Christ in the believer and the believer in Christ—all these are notions for which Hellenistic mystery-religion offers the closest parallels. Mysticism did not grow upon Jewish soil. Closely connected with the Christ-mysticism—the notion of union with the heavenly Lord—is the idea of the new life or the new birth, even though this latter expression is not used by Paul. This conception is not to be found in Judaism and it is lacking in the Jesus of the Synoptic Gospels, although it is present in the Fourth Gospel. The mystery-religions had made the notion of the new creation and rebirth—an acceptable and profoundly suggestive idea—at home in the Mediterranean world of the Roman Empire. At the moment of initiation the old man within the believer passes away and a new one is born who is imperishable. A new sense of knowledge, feeling, willing, assurance, and blessedness awakes within the believer and this experience is interpreted in terms of rebirth. Paul believed that his heavenly Lord, the Christ, had entered into him and that, as the old man vanished, the new took his place.

Furthermore, strong parallels can be produced from Hellenism for the idea that death and resurrection to new life are connected most closely with the death and resurrection of the savior God. Because he has died and risen his followers die with him and become partakers of the new life. Because Orpheus descended to the lower world and came forth again, because Osiris, Adonis, and Attis died and arose again, therefore those who are united to these gods through initiation into the mysteries partake of the rebirth and the new life. We need only to read Romans, chap. 6, in order to observe Paul's close connection with this type of thinking. Also in the

ideas of spirit, ecstasy, revelation, prophecy, gnosis, Paul shows himself to be everywhere in very close relations with Hellenism.

Thus we doubtless have, in Paul's mystical doctrine of redemption, a widespread type of thinking which links Paul firmly with his own age. For one who is at all willing to see the light and has any keenness of discernment, the works already enumerated furnish ample evidence for this conclusion.

We may now take up a second group of Pauline ideas, namely, his teaching regarding the sacraments. This phase of his teaching is closely connected with the one just considered, because the sacraments are related to the idea of salvation and because the two groups of ideas can be connected at many points.

As in all vital religions from earliest times, Paul sees the divine revelation in the God-filled man who, in the exuberance of feeling and knowledge, attests that which God permits him to experience inwardly as God reveals himself to man and shows man the paths and powers of life. Paul experienced this form of religion within his own soul, and the idea of salvation by means of a rich mystical experience, as previously observed, accompanies this type of divine revelation. But Paul knows still another way of participating in divinity and making its power effective in the life of believers. That is by means of sacraments. It is a primitive and widespread notion among men that the individual obtains a share in the superior life and in the power and holiness of the deity whom he reveres by the very fact that he observes and is permitted to observe certain holy initiations. He takes part in certain holy acts, he partakes of holy food, he observes holy washings or anointings, he performs bloody rites along with the sacrifice, he partakes of the offering and its blood, he smears himself with the blood, it drips over him, and thus he enters into a mysterious but very real fellowship with the divinity.

These primitive notions had long ago been exploded by the philosophical speculation of the Greeks, but they come into prominence again in later antiquity, in the Hellenistic and imperial age when the East becomes predominant in the realm of religion. These ideas come from the Orient like a mighty flood pressing into that age, which was religiously agitated and conscious of its needs.

These notions were also connected with the thought of death and immortality, and were revived in the cult and in the mysteries of the great gods of light and springtime. Washings, blood-baptisms, sacred signs and anointings, holy food, and holy meals were intermingled with the mysteries of the deities which come from the East. To refer to only one sufficiently well-known instance, the mysteries of Mithra contain sacraments which are so strikingly analogous to the ancient Christian sacraments that the early church Fathers (e.g., Justin, Tertullian) recognize the similarity and assign it to demonic imitation. The Mithraic mysteries knew a blood-baptism, and a sacramental meal of the initiated observed with the bread and the cup; and with the sacraments of Mithra were connected thoughts of union with the god, the new creation, the new birth, and the food of immortality. The analogies with baptism and the Lord's Supper, as these rites were known to Paul and as they were observed in his churches, are striking and indubitable. Moreover, we must consider how far removed Jesus himself is from sacramental mysticism. He did not baptize, nor did he ordain that his disciples should baptize; the command to baptize is first given by the Risen One. For Jesus the Last Supper had a memorial and parabolic significance, but he founded no sacrament in the ancient sense of the word. Yet water baptism and the meal very soon came to be regarded as a sacrament in that particular world. Where this first took place we do not know, but this important development began before Paul's day. He bears witness to the accomplished fact and he himself stands within the development. It is in this line of development that the Catholic church appears. In his sacramentalism Paul felt and thought as did the Hellenistic world of his age.

In all of this, important lines to be pursued in future research are suggested. We shall presently see what limitations are to be set to such investigation.

The particular conclusions which have been reached in the foregoing inquiry and the method employed for their attainment have not passed unchallenged. As opponents of these views, we may mention Schweitzer and Clemen.

Schweitzer's attack upon the *religionsgeschichtliche* interpretation of Paul is contained in the seventh chapter of his book on *Paul*

and *His Interpreters*,¹ where he incisively criticizes the position of the *religionsgeschichtliche* school, directing his criticisms particularly against Heitmüller and Reitzenstein. Schweitzer took advantage not unskilfully of certain weaknesses of the *religionsgeschichtliche* method, but on the whole his attack is unjustified and ineffectual. Schweitzer will not concede that the sacramental idea is the same with Paul and the Pauline community as it is in the mysteries. If Paul found mystery-religion and sacraments present at all in his world, he took the sacraments by storm (*vergewaltigt*). He does not speculate about the performance, but ascribes to it, without further ado, the postulated effect. Accordingly, Schweitzer must admit that Paul entertains "an unmediated and naked sacramental conception which is not to be met with elsewhere." He further objects that the ceremonial details of sacramental mystery-religion are lacking in Paul, and that he and his community apparently attach very little worth to the elaborate and emotional display of sacred ceremonies. Moreover, if the Pauline doctrine of salvation is actually connected with the sacraments, yet it is not constructed upon them and would remain intact were baptism and the Lord's Supper removed. The prominent sacramental items in the utterances of Paul are the result of a theological adjustment of thought, emphasizing and combining earlier features, and so a matter of externalism rather than a structure in which sacraments are fundamental.

Schweitzer also further criticizes Reitzenstein's study of words and ideas. Paul's notion of mystical union with Christ is explained by Schweitzer on the ground that Paul expects union with the heavenly Lord when the end of the world comes; and then with the end of the messianic kingdom, when God becomes all in all, Paul looks for union with God. Thus the apostle's Christ-mysticism is only an anticipation of the superearthly mode of existence to be realized in the messianic kingdom.

This last suggestion shows us the way in which Schweitzer seeks to solve the chief problems of Paulinism. It is the eschatological method—the same method which he formerly employed in his effort to arrive at an understanding of Jesus' teaching. Again

¹ *Geschichte der Paulinischen Forschung von der Reformation bis auf die Gegenwart* (Tübingen, 1911); English tr., *Paul and His Interpreters* (London, 1912).

and again he resorts to eschatology, which certainly was an important phenomenon, and from this he attempts to derive the oldest form of Christianity. According to Schweitzer, the mystical and sacramental "physical element" (*Naturhafte*) in Paul's scheme of redemption does not stand on a par with the eschatological element. The latter is a given quantum, along with the notions of transformation and resurrection; but both mysticism and sacraments must be derived from eschatology. With reference to the very important fact that Pauline and Hellenistic mysticism are so closely akin in linguistic forms of expression, Schweitzer thinks that the Pauline mysticism, which developed from eschatology, found in the language of the mystery-religions notions and expressions which, "as though it had been determined by a pre-established *religionsgeschichtliche* harmony," facilitated, suggested, and even first made possible its own further growth.

It is quite true that Schweitzer occasionally opposes false inferences which may attach themselves to the methods and results of *religionsgeschichtliche* study. Yet it is also certain that his constant and exclusive emphasis upon eschatology is an uncontrolled exaggeration and that his polemic rests for the most part upon inferences and points of view which at the outset do not appeal to any student of the history of religion. Reitzenstein, in a lengthy article,¹ answered Schweitzer's criticism in a charitable and friendly manner, while very skilfully and successfully maintaining the superiority of his own position. In the performance of this task, as frequently on other occasions, he shows an inward religious appreciation of the subject and he differentiates between that which admits of *religionsgeschichtliche* comparison and that which must remain unexplained in Paul because it is his own inward religious experience, his revelation.

Another scholar whose criticism of the *religionsgeschichtliche* school I would mention in closing is C. Clemen. Two books² have come from his pen, one more comprehensive and the other more

¹ "Religionsgeschichte und Eschatologie," *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*, XIII (1912), 1-28.

² *Religionsgeschichtliche Erklärung des Neuen Testaments* (see above, p. 505) and *Der Einfluss der Mysterienreligionen auf das älteste Christentum* (Giessen, 1913).

brief. It is only the second, briefer one to which I wish to refer, because this is the more recent and is wholly concerned with the present subject. Clemen's criticism corresponds in some respects with that of Schweitzer. Clemen also would allow that the mystery-religions may have exerted a slight influence upon early Christianity. He emphasizes very strongly that we know nothing of so early a spread of the mysteries. These are encountered, in their wider expansion, first in the second half of the first and in the second centuries. In reply to this it may be said that our knowledge of the mysteries is as a whole very meager, and that these cults and initiations may have been widespread even though we now know nothing of them. Then we may refer to the fact that the language used by Paul, where he shows striking connections with the religious language of the mysteries, likewise presupposes that these things are older than we may be able to demonstrate. In the age in which Paul grew up the mysteries were much more widely spread than the paucity of the extant sources would lead us to believe. In this connection the isolated statement of Plutarch, to which Böhlig referred in his previously mentioned book,¹ is well worthy of attention. In his life of Pompey, chap. xxiv, Plutarch gives an account of the pirates: "They offered strange sacrifices upon Mount Olympus [in Lycia] and performed certain secret rites, of which those of Mithra are preserved even to our own time, having first been introduced by those people."² We are dealing here with a statement which in point of time belongs to the first century B.C.; and the provenance is Paul's native state, for the pirates had their stronghold in Cilicia.

A second means which Clemen uses to separate Paul from the mysteries is to give a new significance to the statements of the apostle, spiritualizing them as much as possible to make a symbol out of sacramental experiences and expressions. To give a short illustration, "as many of you as were baptized into Christ put on Christ"³ does not mean that you put on Christ through the

¹ *Die Geisteskultur von Tarsos*, p. 90; cf. also pp. 76-84 and 89-107.

² ξένας δὲ θυσίας ἔθνον αὐτοὶ τὰς ἐν Ὀλύμπῳ καὶ τελετάς τινας ἀπορρήτους ἐτέλουν ὧν ἡ τοῦ Μίθρου καὶ μέχρι δεῦρο διασώζεται καταδειχθεῖσα πρῶτον ὑπ' ἐκείνων.

³ ὅσοι εἰς Χριστὸν ἐβαπτίσθητε, Χριστὸν ἐνεδύσασθε, Gal. 3:27.

performance of baptism, but that in baptism you have confessed your faith and thereby you put on Christ. But Paul's statements in the main are too unequivocal and emphatic to permit of such symbolic spiritualization. We may note, for example, I Cor. 10:1 ff. or 15:29.

In conclusion, we may indicate the results of recent research on the subject of Paul and Hellenism. The variety of excellent and devoted work which has been done by theologians and philologists shows us the way by which we can come nearer to an understanding and a correct estimate of Paul. We see him and his Christianity surrounded by a world which was exceptionally rich in religious thinking. We see the feelings and ideas of this environment passing over into early Christianity. There is little danger that the greatness and distinctiveness of Paul can be lessened by this inquiry. Paul is to be judged, not by what he had in common with his environment, but by what was distinctive to him. He who knows how to read and understand will ever be charmed anew by the power of personally experienced religion in the very refined, spiritual, and imperishable form in which it meets us in the Pauline letters. That which constitutes the greatness and value of the gospels—inwardness, belief in the Father, the worth of man's soul, love, and the close union of religion with ethics—all this is vitally experienced by Paul and is freshly and insistently expounded. This type of religion was never supplanted by the religion of "physical" mysticism and sacramentalism. On turning from a study of the Hellenistic mystery-religions we are always newly impressed by the greatness and inwardness of Pauline religion. It is the business of correct *religionsgeschichtliche* research never to obliterate this distinction. A religion is never to be judged by the survivals which adhere to it from an earlier stage of development, but by the noblest features which appear in its evolution.